

Anatomy of National Public Radio's Blacklist:
An Investigation into Journalistic Corruption

By Steven Emerson
December 11, 1998

1. Chronology of NPR's Blacklist

On August 31, 1998 in the *Boston Globe*, national columnist Jeff Jacoby revealed that NPR had banned me from appearing on the air as the result of collusion between a leader of a militant Arab group and NPR staffers. Specifically, Mr. Jacoby revealed that on August 21, 1998, Mr. Ali Abunimah of the Arab American Action Network posted a series of e-mail exchanges with an NPR staffer in which NPR officially promised that I would not be interviewed again on NPR. Mr. Abunimah's organization, according to his writings and the statements of his group, has championed Islamic extremist groups and attacked U.S. "genocide" in Iraq.

The specific evidence revealed in the e-mails is as follows:

- In response to demands by Mr. Abunimah that I be prohibited from appearing on NPR, NPR producer Ellen Silva wrote to Mr. Abunimah "you have my promise he won't be used again. it is npr [sic] policy." Ms. Silva also apologized on behalf of "the staff of NPR" to Mr. Abunimah for my appearance August 20, 1998 on "Talk of the Nation."
- NPR yanked me from "Talk of the Nation" about 20 minutes into the show after I had been asked to be available for the full hour. As the transcript shows, I was introduced as one of two guests who would be interviewed regarding the U.S. military strikes in Afghanistan and the Sudan. The e-mail exchange between Mr. Abunimah and NPR clearly established that I was pulled because of pressure exerted the moment I began to be interviewed.
- The next morning (August 21) on "Morning Edition," NPR featured an interview with Mr. Abunimah despite the fact that NPR's Vice President Jeffery Dvorkin acknowledged later in a meeting with me that Mr. Abunimah was "not considered" to be "a legitimate representative" of the Arab community.
- Several days after I was yanked from "Talk of the Nation" on August 20, I was called again by another "low-level" NPR producer to see if I would agree to be on the air again on "Talk of the Nation" scheduled for the following day. I agreed, but less than five minutes later, the producer called back to tell me that I was "not in the mix anymore." Until the disclosure of the e-mails, I had no way of knowing that this was due to the blacklist.

- The e-mails show that other NPR staffers also had secret discussions with Mr. Abunimah in which they colluded on the creation of a blacklist against me. For example, Mr. Abunimah says that he “spoke with National News editor Michael Fields, who acknowledged that having Emerson on had been a mistake and that it ‘would not happen again.’ ” Mr. Abunimah wrote that “Barbara Rehm, the producer of ATC also expressed her regret and recognition that it [my appearance] should not have happened.” Mr. Abunimah also wrote, “When he [Emerson] was last on NPR on June 24, in a report by Jackie Northam, there was a public outcry to which the producers of All Things Considered can attest (see copy of my letter, attached). This should not have happened again.”

2. My Meeting with Mr. Jeffrey Dvorkin, Vice President of NPR

As the result of these disclosures, I met with Mr. Dvorkin on September 11, 1998. He promised to investigate the matters raised in the e-mails. Yet, in form letters sent to members of the listening public who complained about NPR’s blacklist, Mr. Dvorkin denied the existence of any blacklist and sought to pin the blame on the “error” of NPR producer Silva, whom he described in a conversation with one journalist as “low-level.” Subsequent letters distributed by an NPR spokesperson have now asserted that “two NPR officials were incorrect in saying that it is now NPR policy not to include Mr. Emerson as a possible commentator on future NPR news programs.” **The evidence clearly shows that a blacklist did exist, that NPR officials held routine conversations with representatives of various groups, elicited actual commitments to change programming and that the blacklist of me continues to this very day.**

Although contradicted by the evidence, subsequently Mr. Dvorkin and “Talk of the Nation” Ray Suarez—the latter through e-mails Mr. Suarez sent in response to inquiries-- have falsely asserted that I had not been yanked from “Talk of the Nation” on August 20. In a brazen fabrication, Mr. Suarez asserted that I, if asked, would corroborate the fact that I had not been pulled from “Talk of the Nation.” Let me state categorically that if Mr. Suarez had contacted me, I would have told him the opposite—that in fact the record shows that I was indeed pulled off the show because of political pressure.

Mr. Dvorkin also denied that Mr. Abunimah’s interview the next morning on “Morning Edition” had anything to do with his communication with NPR in its apparent desire to appease him. In Mr. Dvorkin’s meeting with me, he referred to Mr. Abunimah as “a bit crazy” in light, as Mr. Dvorkin pointed out to me, of the “hundreds of e-mails and letters” that Mr. Abunimah has sent to NPR in protest of its “anti-Arab” coverage. Mr. Dvorkin also stated flatly that because of Mr. Abunimah’s behavior and incessant complaints, NPR considered Mr. Abunimah “not a legitimate” Arab American spokesperson. Thus, if Mr. Abunimah was considered “not a legitimate” spokesperson, why did NPR interview him, if not for the effort to appease him?

In his e-mail, Mr. Abunimah cited his conversations with Mr. Loren Jenkins, NPR’s foreign editor. Although I have never met Mr. Jenkins, he clearly harbors a derogatory view of me, which he has shared with Mr. Abunimah, according to Mr. Abunimah’s e-mail. As the result of this reference in Mr. Abunimah’s e-mail, I conducted several interviews with NPR staffers with whom I maintained in confidential contact. I have discovered that Mr. Jenkins has, in his capacity as an NPR official, referred to me in slanderous and defamatory language. While Mr. Jenkins is certainly free to form his own personal opinions about me or for that matter about U.S. policies in the Middle East, an exercise he apparently engages in quite freely at NPR, I am

troubled by the fact that NPR has allowed him to make slanderous and defamatory comments about me in his capacity as an employee at NPR and the degree to which he has been able to effect programming to advance his own political agenda.

3. NPR Staffers Publicly Champion Extremist Views

In my further inquiry into the role played by Mr. Jenkins, it has become apparent that he has openly espoused militant views, a fact that ought to have rendered him suspect as foreign editor in the eyes of NPR officials. Mr. Jenkins has in the past publicly compared Israeli actions to those carried out by the Nazis in an issue of *Rolling Stone Magazine*. Furthermore, in a talk he gave at a June 1997 convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), a group which has championed Hizzbollah and Hamas as "freedom fighting groups." In the course of his talk, according to a transcript, Mr. Jenkins repeatedly urged those attending to write to NPR to make their voices heard to counteract the complaints being leveled by the "pro-Israeli" lobby. I would suggest that as foreign editor of NPR, it is highly unprofessional for him to orchestrate lobbying on a particular issue at his network.

In another revealing admission made at the same ADC conference, Mr. Jenkins boasted that he relied on information about the Middle East from Internet e-mails disseminated by an organization called LAW, whose information he described as "very good," "very accurate" and "balanced." Yet, tellingly, Mr. Jenkins stated that while he depended on this group for information, he admitted that he did not even know the organization's full name. LAW is a self-described Palestinian advocacy group whose officials have routinely fabricated and exaggerated claims of Israeli human rights abuses, "executions" and arrests, claiming that Israel's actions are similar to those of Nazis and South Africa. LAW had openly defended Hamas terrorists who have killed innocent civilians and has issued press releases that have turned out to be veritable propaganda.

The problem reflected by Mr. Jenkins' active advocacy of a militant agenda is not apparently unique at NPR. Joyce Davis, assistant foreign editor, in an interview released in November 1998 by the United Association for Studies and Research, openly advocated dialoging with radical Islamic groups and admitted that she has tried to change programming to advance this agenda. While I certainly believe Ms. Davis should be free to espouse any views she believes in, the question is whether she should be at NPR helping to make decisions about programming; it would seem far more appropriate for Ms. Davis to be on the outside at a pro-Islamic institute where her views could be openly identified, thus allowing listeners the right to know about the origins of the information they receive.

According to a transcript of a "dialogue" released by the United Association for Studies and Research, a militant Islamic "research" group in Virginia whose founders and current officials are Hamas leaders and champions, Ms. Davis has embraced and espoused the dogma issued by militant Islamic groups posing under false veneer. Leaders of United Association for Studies and Research include Hamas chieftain Mousa Marzuk and Ahmed Yousef, who has routinely invoked Islamic religious dogma calling for the annihilation of Jews. Ms. Davis' talk was held at the UASR offices of Mr. Yousef. The transcript shows that Ms. Davis openly subscribed to militant Islamic ideology's deceptive propaganda in the West as falsely portraying itself against violence, in favor of democracy and against the enforced second-class treatment of women.

For example, Ms. Davis made the statement that militant Islamic parties in Jordan and Pakistan are “responsible and stabilizing influences in government and in society.” In fact, the militant Islamic parties in both countries have been involved in countless acts of terrorism, violence and in propagating virulent anti-Semitic, anti-Christian and anti-American propaganda. Asserting that the Jordan Islamic Action Front is a “stabilizing influence” would be the equivalent of claiming that the inclusion of David Duke’s party in the United States or Jean Le Penn’s party in France are “stabilizing influences” in their respective societies.

Ms. Davis stated that “the United States should try to begin to understand the causes and reasons for violence from Islamic groups. In many cases, Islamic organizations are fighting corrupt regimes that refuse to allow plurality and democracy...if the Islamists are a threat, their major threat in the Muslim world is really not through the violence but through the ballot box.”

About which groups is Ms. Davis referring? Islamic Jihad and Hamas routinely carry out suicide bombings and openly propagate a militant Islamic theology of fighting Jews and Christians. The Egyptian Gama Islamiya leader Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman masterminded the World Trade Center bombing. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood openly issues fatwas calling for suicide bombings against Egyptian writers for asserting “secularist” views and against Egyptian Muslims who have converted to Christianity. The Algerian Armed Islamic Group and the military wing of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front have together killed over 70,000 young Algerian women, children, writers, moderates, teachers and secularists. According to records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Anwar Haddam, the head of the American branch of the Islamic Salvation Front, is now imprisoned and being subjected to deportation for his support of and ties to violent terrorism. A lawsuit filed by human rights groups on behalf of Muslim mothers of young Algerians killed by Mr. Haddam’s party—which has never been covered by NPR—details the gruesome executions carried out by the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front. The Sudanese National Islamic Front, headed by Hassan al-Turabi, has participated in orchestrating terrorist attacks with Osama bin Laden, has justified the forcible imposition of an Islamic fundamentalist regime and the rejection of democracy as “mandated by the Koran” and has conducted a brutal war against Muslim dissidents and Christians with genocidal brutality.

At another point in her talk, Ms. Davis advocated abolishing the term “fundamentalists,” while claiming that the “most passionate voices for women’s rights are coming from people, both men and women, who are members of Islamic parties...[O]ne of the biggest criticisms of Islam in this country is that women have no place—which is the farthest from the truth from we can see.” In point of fact, women in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, the West Bank and Gaza have been the subject of enforced second-class Islamic fundamentalist treatment. Thousands of young Algerian women have been killed only because they would not wear the hijab. Acid and lye have been thrown in the faces of Muslim women in Gaza, Cairo and Amman because they would not cover their heads.

Ms. Davis described Sudan’s Hasan al Turabi’s defense of the punishment of chopping off hands as demonstrating the “kindness” of Islam. When asked an anti-Semitic question by one of the participating Islamic fundamentalists about conspiratorial influence of Jewish Americans on American foreign policy, Ms. Davis partly served to reinforce the anti-Semitism by commenting that “there are some Jews—many Jews—who only care about Israel, and that’s primary.”

4. Patterns of Bias, Selective Omissions and Deliberate Falsification of News at NPR

I have conducted a larger review of many of the Middle Eastern related stories that have aired on NPR during the past four years.

- NPR has sympathetically portrayed leaders of militant Middle Eastern terrorist organizations (in contrast to the appropriate hard-hitting perspective attached to its coverage of the American ultra right-wing and the KKK); has rationalized suicide bombings by Hamas as “reactions” to Israeli settlements (which is like saying that the Oklahoma City bombing was a “reaction” to Waco); has not done one major story on the tremendous weapons and explosives buildup by Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza during the past five years; has systematically refused to investigate militant Islamic activity on American soil (with one minor exception); has provided uncritical platforms for militant Islamic groups masquerading under false veneer as “civil rights” and “academic” status; and has frequently allowed militant Islamic groups and officials in the United States, without subjecting them to any challenge or skepticism, to present themselves under false cover.
- The Directors of the FBI and the CIA have repeatedly testified that the number one threat facing the United States today is from militant Islamic terrorist groups, both inside and outside the United States. Yet in the span of four years, NPR has done only one short report exclusively focusing on the militant Islamic threat in the United States. Nor has NPR ever reported that law enforcement and intelligence officials have repeatedly stated that militant Islamic groups pose the number one threat globally to American interests.
- In contrast, however, NPR has featured, for example, officials of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) which has on more than one dozen occasions in which CAIR was never challenged on its credentials or reminded of its past statements openly lauding terrorist groups or its sponsorship of militant Islamic rallies in the United States featuring known fundamentalist extremists. NPR has never revealed to its listeners that: CAIR was created by a Hamas front group in Texas known as the Islamic Association of Palestine; that its board of advisors and directors include someone named in the Justice Department list as a potential unindicted co-conspirator in the World Trade Center bombing; that CAIR has fabricated or exaggerated scores of “hate crimes;” that its leaders have openly proclaimed their support for Hamas and defended terrorist operations; and that CAIR has defended leaders of the Sudanese National Islamic Front, Hamas and Gamat Islamiya. In my meeting with Mr. Dvorkin, he told me that if David Duke were interviewed on NPR, it would be incumbent upon NPR to identify his background as a member of the Klan to NPR listeners. Why has NPR dropped this same standard when it comes to militant Islamic groups operating in the U.S.?
- NPR has never once reported on the more than 50 radical conventions, held in the United States during the past five years, of militant Islamic organizations at which exhortations to commit violence and terrorism and solicitations for terrorist groups were made. For example, earlier this year, on May 24, 1998, on the campus of Brooklyn College, a large militant Islamic rally was held urging jihad against the Jews and at which incendiary racist language was used. The rally was sponsored by a dozen American Islamic groups, including CAIR and others that have been afforded uncritical status at NPR. The story about this event—based on an actual tape recording of the event by someone who was there-- was published in the Summer 1998 issue of the *Journal of Counterterrorism & Security International* and was

also the subject of two consecutive lead editorials in the *New York Post*. The article and the tape recording of the event were offered to NPR by the *Journal*, but NPR never responded to the offer.

- While NPR has done various in-depth stories about right-wing Christian extremists in the United States and radical Jewish settlers on the West Bank, NPR has been unwilling to report about the similarly extremist agenda of militant Islamic groups operating under false cover in the United States. For example, NPR had not broadcast any in-depth story about the investigative findings and incriminating documents released by the FBI in its ongoing investigation into the secret headquarters of the Islamic Jihad that operated out of the campus of the University of South Florida in Tampa.
- Neither has NPR not focused one in depth story on the specific operations of any of the more than two dozen radical Islamic organizations operating in the United States, including Hizzbollah, Hamas and Gamat Islamiya. Most recently, Robert Blitzer, until recently Chief of the FBI Terrorism/Counterterrorism Planning Section, testified in Congress on October 2, 1998 on the threat of terrorism facing the United States. Mr. Blitzer described the greatest threat facing the United States as emanating from militant Islamic groups. Yet NPR ignored his testimony as NPR has ignored the testimonies of top FBI and CIA officials on at least 10 occasions during the past three years in their descriptions of the terrorist threats facing the United States.

5. NPR and Jihad

For more than four years, NPR has deceived the American public by packaging militant Islamic apologia as news and analysis.

- For example, in May 1994, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, in a South African mosque, called for jihad to liberate Jerusalem. On May 18, 1994, NPR aired a story by Robert Siegel, the premise of which was that Arafat's use of "jihad" was, in contrast to the meaning attributed by "Arafat's detractors," actually "peaceful." To buttress this argument, Mr. Siegel interviewed Georgetown University Professor John Esposito. But Mr. Siegel conspicuously failed to point out that Mr. Esposito had served on the boards of Hamas and militant Moslem Brotherhood advocacy institutes, including the American Muslim Council and the Middle East Affairs Journal of the United Association for Studies and Research (the Virginia-based group that serves as the strategic political arm of Hamas in the U.S. and whose leaders have called for killing Jews). Not surprisingly, in his staged interview with Mr. Siegel, Professor Esposito claimed that "most" uses of the term "jihad" are for "virtuous" goals, such as "a jihad to clean up the town, a jihad for a literacy campaign, a jihad against aids [sic]." In fact, the term "jihad" has never been used in any of the contexts Mr. Esposito described; if pressed, as he should have been, Mr. Esposito would not have been able provide any example where "jihad" has been invoked by Islamic officials or thinkers in the false meanings he ascribed to "jihad." Although the term "jihad" can certainly mean internal struggle for genuine moderates, the fact is that the most revered Islamic scholars in the Muslim world today have uniformly described "jihad" as a mandatory violent holy war to impose Islam on those areas not under genuine Islamic religious sovereignty. These include the very founders and leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood including Sayid Qutb and Abdul Ala Mawdudi.

- NPR's deliberate efforts to sanitize Hamas terrorism goes back at least four years. One story, emblematic of NPR's one-sided reporting, aired on October 22, 1994, in which NPR focused on how Hamas "also does good," lauding its "terrific...community organization...[including] health care clinics, schools and small businesses." NPR ignored the critical ideological role of Hamas' militant theology, its exploitation of social services designed to recruit radical ideological supporters and terrorists and its raw anti-Semitic and anti-western dogma that Hamas propagates through every one of its social, religious and educational institutions. An equivalent story would have been lauding the educational services provided by the ultra right-wing militia without reporting that the educational curriculum teaches hatred of the United States government.
- NPR's continued sanitation of the terms "jihad" and "holy war" recently surfaced following the American strikes against Afghanistan and the Sudan in an interview on August 23, 1998 with Nihad Awad, head of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a group which has championed Islamic terrorist groups and has routinely issued allegations that reporting on radical Islam constitutes a "hate crime" against Islam. In the interview, Mr. Awad claimed, "I don't see holy war as a concept in Islam, it is not, it does not exist. There is a word jihad. Jihad is severely misunderstood. Jihad means legitimate struggle...It never means holy war. It does not exist in the Arabic or Islamic literature..." Mr. Awad also claimed that jihad is when the U.S. Army "goes to defend people," or when the "conductor tries to save the life of a baby," or when a mother "raise[s] her children." On none of these statements did NPR challenge Mr. Awad. NPR refused to challenge him. While it is expected that Mr. Awad would disseminate propaganda, the question remains as to why NPR would accommodate him. Terrorist leader Osama bin Laden has routinely called for "jihad" to "destroy the enemies of Islam." There are more than one dozen militant groups whose names include "jihad" in their title. There are numerous public calls for jihad made by Middle Eastern religious leaders. On April 8, 1998, for example, the Associated Press reported that in a sunrise sermon, Abdel Rahman al-Sidess, one of the three imams, or high-ranking clerics, at the Grand Mosque, called for "jihad," or holy war to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli control and end Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands. Abdullah Azzam, the founder of the Afghan jihad movement and who has been lionized by the Islamic Association for Palestine, a Hamas front organization in which CAIR's Mr. Awad once served as a senior official, openly declared that "The Jihad, the fighting, is obligatory on you wherever you can perform it. And just as when you are in America you must fast - unless you are ill or on a voyage - so, too, must you wage Jihad. The word Jihad means fighting only, fighting with the sword." (Source: Videotape of Abdullah Azzam, First Conference on Jihad, Brooklyn, New York, 1988, broadcast on "Jihad in America")

6. NPR's Denial of Critical Information on Terrorist "Experts"

In a November 6, 1998 report on the federal indictment of Osama bin Laden, NPR quoted former CIA official Vincent Cannistraro as claiming that the U.S. was "demonizing" Osama bin Laden. (This was the 7th such interview with Mr. Cannistraro on Middle East terrorist issues.) Yet NPR did not reveal that publicly available records from the World Trade Center trials show that Mr. Cannistraro had agreed to serve as a defense witness for Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman, who was convicted of masterminding the World Trade Center bombing and who was recently named as a co-conspirator along with Osama bin Laden in operating a terrorist network against the U.S. According to these records, Mr. Cannistraro was prepared to testify that Sheik Abdul Rahman's terrorist organization and "activities...do not meet the criteria...of a terrorist cell," and "that

there is no information to support the contention of an international Jihad organization under the direction of Dr. Omar Abdul Rahman.” The U.S. government filed papers clearly disputing Mr. Cannistraro’s expertise as well as the lack of truthfulness regarding his statements; the judge ultimately would not allow Mr. Cannistraro to testify on behalf of the Sheik because his testimony was not considered relevant nor was Mr. Cannistraro considered to have the expertise he claimed he had. Moreover, according to records filed, Mr. Cannistraro had agreed to serve as a defense witness for \$1,500 a day. In addition, according to published reports and according to Oliver Revell, former associate executive director of FBI, Mr. Cannistraro has also become associated with an Islamic Jihad front group in Florida. Yet NPR featured Mr. Cannistraro as an “objective” commentator on Middle Eastern terrorism; given Mr. Cannistraro’s financial interest and clear ideological bias, it is any wonder that he would assert that the U.S. was trying to “demonize” Osama bin Laden? Yet to the unsuspecting listener, Mr. Cannistraro’s views would be considered “objective.” That NPR has blacklisted me, yet has continuously provided a platform for someone as tainted as Mr. Cannistraro to uncritically disseminate his views is a telling example of the editorial corruption that has set in at NPR.

Conclusion:

NPR has engaged in a systematic pattern of bias, dishonesty and misrepresentation in reporting on Middle East militant movements and terrorist matters. NPR’s creation of the blacklist represents just one component of an entire spectrum of reckless journalistic behavior. NPR may very well be violating the spirit if not the letter of federal statutes as well as flouting Congressional directives in ensuring the broadcast of “balanced programming.” Because NPR is now engaged in a deliberate cover-up of this editorial corruption, it is vital that oversight bodies external to NPR, as well as other options, be pursued to correct this scandal.

Attachment: Boston Globe August 31, 1998 by Jeffrey Jacoby

September 4, 1998, Friday, City Edition

SECTION: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; Pg. A16

LENGTH: 188 words

HEADLINE: NPR has not blacklisted anyone;

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BODY:

It is unfortunate that Jeff Jacoby did not speak to me before writing his Aug. 31 op-ed column, "The blacklisting of an investigative journalist by NPR. " If he had, he would have known there is no blacklisting of anyone at National Public Radio. To accuse NPR of blacklisting is inflammatory, sensationalistic, and just plain wrong.

The incident he refers to was an error on the part of the "Talk of the Nation" producer. She misspoke to a lobby group and now understands that she was in error.

The guest in question, Steven Emerson, did appear on "Talk of the Nation." He has never been banned from NPR and never will be. Emerson is one of many commentators available to NPR on events involving his area of expertise (terrorism and counterterrorism).

No doubt there will be other opportunities for him to appear again.

NPR makes choices based on the journalistic requirements of the story, not because of pressure from lobbying groups. NPR has a reputation for fair and balanced journalism. We intend to keep it.

JEFFREY DVORKIN Vice president -news and information National Public Radio Washington, D.C.

Source: Direct Submission

Organization: Arab American Action Network, Chicago

E-mail: Ali Abunimah <ahabunim@midway.uchicago.edu>

Date: Fri, 21 Aug 1998 10:08:52 -0500 (CDT)

Title: NPR Promises Not to Use Racist Again

TEXT:

Please review the following exchange I had with NPR in which they assure me that they will not use Steven Emerson again. This follows my complaint yesterday that he was a guest on Talk of the Nation. Emerson, an ant-Muslim racist, had been previously used in a June 24 report on the case of Mohammed Salah.

Please help me to hold them accountable to this promise.

The exchange reads from the bottom up (most recent letter at the top).

**Ali Abunimah
ahabunim@midway.uchicago.edu**

----- Forwarded message -----

On Fri, 21 Aug Ellen Silva wrote:

Date: Fri, 21 Aug 1998 10:22:35 -0400
From: Ellen Silva - TOTN - 2342 <ESILVA@npr.org>
To: ahabunim@midway.uchicago.edu
Cc: ESILVA@npr.org
Subject: RE: NPR: Anti-Arab Racist on TOTN

i have forwarded your concerns to him.

you have my promise he won't be used again.

it is npr policy.

-e

On Fri, 21 Aug Ali Abunimah wrote:

Date: Fri, 21 Aug 1998 09:12:03 -0500 (CDT)
From: Ali Abunimah <ahabunim@midway.uchicago.edu>
To: Ellen Silva - TOTN - 2342 <ESILVA@npr.org>
Subject: RE: NPR: Anti-Arab Racist on TOTN

thank you for your response. who is the executive producer of totn? have you forwarded my concerns to him or her? other than an apology, which we received previously, what assurance can i have that this won't happen again?

Ali Abunimah
ahabunim@midway.uchicago.edu

On Fri, 21 Aug 1998, Ellen Silva - TOTN - 2342 wrote:

> thank you for your letter.
>
> our executive producer was in charge of that decision...not me...
> i take your point and extend an apology to you from the staff of totn.
>
> please take care,
>
> -ellen
>

On Thursday, 20 Aug Ali Abunimah wrote:

Subject: NPR: Anti-Arab Racist on TOTN

August 20, 1998

Ms. Silva,

I am shocked and disappointed that TOTN had Steven Emerson on its call in show today as a guest. Mr. Emerson is a well-documented anti-Arab, anti-Muslim racist. When he was last on NPR on June 24, in a report by Jackie Northam, there was a public outcry to which the producers of All Things Considered can attest (see copy of my letter, attached). This should not have happened again. In fact, at the time of the Northam report, I spoke with National News editor Michael Fields, who acknowledged that having Emerson on had been a mistake and that it "would not happen again." Barbara Rehm, the producer of ATC also expressed her regret and recognition that it should not have happened. Last time, I accepted the explanation that it had been an innocent error. But how many errors can be innocent? This is a very serious matter and will require an appropriate response.

If you don't know who Emerson is, or what he is about, don't take my word for it. Ask your colleague Loren Jenkins.

I hope all at NPR will act responsibly in the current crisis and not resort to the usual speculation and anti-Muslim "experts". The start of NPR's coverage is not encouraging. We will be listening very carefully, and pursuing this matter further.

**Ali Abunimah
ahabunim@midway.uchicago.edu**

Via: Fax 202-414-3073

Ent.Home.B.SAE.NPR.10.21.98